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THE

HOLY SPIRIT RESISTED.

BY CALEB KIMBALL,

AUTHOR OF "A CHILD ASSISTED IN GIVING THE HEART TO GOD," AND "THE YOUNG CHRISTIAN DIRECTED."

But they rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit; therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them. — Isa. 63 : 10.

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PREFACE.

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THESE pages are offered to the public, in the hope that the remarks and facts which they contain may induce the unconverted to cherish the influence of the divine Spirit, and may arouse some, who have resisted his operations, to consider their ways, before they are summoned to appear in the presence of their final Judge. The subject certainly is one of great practical importance, and deserves from all classes the most serious and prayerful attention. The Holy Spirit is often grieved by the impenitent for the want of correct impressions as to the nature and design of his gracious work. If the considerations herein presented are instrumental of leading one sinner so to receive the Holy Spirit as to become the subject of his renewing grace,

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the writer will feel that his labor has not been lost, and the reader surely will have sufficient occasion for devout thanksgiving and praise.

Although the cases in the ninth and twelfth chapters strongly resemble each other, it seemed proper, notwithstanding, to treat them separately, as the difference, at least in their external features, would lead a discriminating pastor to vary somewhat his method of treatment, in order to expect speedily the happiest results.

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THE

HOLY SPIRIT RESISTED.

CHAPTER I.

THE HOLY SPIRIT RESISTED BY HATRED AND OPPOSITION TO DIVINE TRUTH.

"Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost." — Acts 7 : 51.

The faithful exhibition of divine truth awakens the opposition of the natural heart. An affecting illustration of this may be seen in the persecutors of Stephen, while they listened to the strains of inspired eloquence poured from the lips of that holy man. He spake with an elevation of soul peculiar to one who stood upon the verge of a brighter hemisphere, and had caught a glimpse of the loftier scenes of another

world. In the light of a purer day, he surveyed the unhappy men before him, who thirsted for his blood, and were rapidly fitting themselves for unmingled tribulation. The scene was deeply affecting. His compassions were moved, his benevolence kindled; his heart glowed with celestial ardor for their salvation. In prospect of approaching death, he addressed them with the energy and directness of a man of God. The word came with power. It was accompanied by the Holy Ghost. It discovered to them the enormity of transgression. It brought into open day the deeds of darkness concealed under the veil of a most specious exterior. It revived afresh in their memories the iniquities of their fathers, which by their conduct they approved, and portrayed before them their own characters, stained with the blood of the saints. The picture was true, but they would not acknowledge it. They rejected the light; they resisted the Spirit; they were filled with indignation at a view of

their own characters, and added to all their other crimes the sin of stoning this bold, devout, and faithful servant of the Lord of glory.

As the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart is indispensable to salvation, I design, in this little book, to point out some of the ways in which sinners resist his gracious operations, and to show the fatal consequences of losing the converting power of this divine and friendly agent.

In pursuance of this object, then, I remark, that sinners resist the Holy Ghost, when they hate and oppose the plain declarations of divine truth. The Spirit of God is the grand agent in regeneration. He employs truth to bring the mind to submit to Christ. When this truth is hated and opposed, the Spirit is opposed, and the very means by which the soul is to be renewed and saved are rejected. The Bible is the production of the Holy Spirit, for "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." All its truths,

therefore, perfectly correspond with the mind of the Spirit. When these truths are opposed, the Spirit is opposed, and the great instrumentality which he employs to renovate the heart is resisted. Those who hate and oppose the gospel, when faithfully and powerfully preached, resist the Holy Ghost, for he is pleased to employ such exhibitions of his truth to awaken the conscience and save the soul. "It hath pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." It is the clear, pointed, faithful, pungent appeals of divine truth to the heart, which become mighty through God to the pulling down of the strong holds of sin. Such efforts he delights to bless. They are gratifying to the feelings of his benevolent heart. They are emphatically the sword of the Spirit. If sinners are converted at all, it will ordinarily be, where the gospel is preached in its greatest purity and power. There will be seen the clearest manifestations of the divine Spirit; there will be witnessed the

most affecting exhibitions of infinite power; there will be felt the most melting and subduing operations of unsearchable love. Such a place is always solemn; it is the house of God, the gate of heaven to all who believe and obey the Word. But a far different effect is produced upon those who resist the truth. To them the Word of eternal life becomes a savor of death unto death. Such was the effect of Stephen's preaching upon his unhappy auditors. It awakened the latent opposition of their carnal minds. They kindled into wrath at those affecting delineations of their guilty conduct. They openly withstood the Spirit of grace, and lost his converting and saving power. Said that holy man, "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye." They opposed the truth, they quenched the Spirit, they hardened their hearts, and, beyond a doubt, many of them sealed their final doom. In view of such amazing conse-

quences, let us all beware how we treat the gospel. Hatred and opposition, contempt and scoffing, grieve the Holy Ghost; and, if that divine agent takes his final departure from a sinner, that sinner is ruined for a whole eternity. He sinks into a state of stupidity, or assumes an attitude of resistance, which no power of argument, no array of eloquence or appeals of divine truth, are able to overcome.

A young man, belonging to a respectable family, early began to hate and oppose the truths of evangelical religion. He soon embraced fundamental errors, became exceedingly hardened in sin, resisted and grieved the Holy Ghost, and was apparently left by that heavenly agent to fill up the measure of his iniquities. While multitudes around him were awakened by the Spirit, and melted into contrition and love, he continued to resist the truth, and in hardness of heart to fight against God. At length, by acts of uncommon wickedness, he was deprived of his reason, and

died, a most miserable and loathsome object of unrestrained depravity, in the alms-house.

Another young man early began to cherish opposition to the truths of revealed religion. He soon became an abandoned sinner, hushed the voice of conscience, opposed and quenched the influence of the Spirit, and to all human appearance was left by him in blindness of mind to work out his destruction. Overtaken in crime by the hand of justice, he was proved guilty of murder, and finished his short but dreadful career in depravity, a most hardened wretch, upon the gallows.

Voltaire, having resisted and grieved the Holy Spirit by his violent opposition to revealed religion, said to his attending physician, "If you will preserve my life six months, I will give you half my fortune." His physician replied, "you cannot live six weeks." "Then," exclaimed he in despair, "I shall go to the devil."

Paine, the infidel, endowed by his Creator with a penetrating intellect, grieved the

Holy Spirit by his bitter opposition to divine truth, and was left by him to follow the perverse inclinations of a carnal mind. Consumed by intemperance and licentiousness, with bitter oaths and blasphemy upon his lips, he died in the frightful horrors of unmitigated despair.

If further illustrations of this point were needed, we might look into those assemblies where evangelical truth is hated and opposed. Wealth and fashion, elegance and taste, may be found in them; but the Spirit of God, in his enlightening and converting power, is not there. While congregations, close by their side, embracing evangelical doctrines, are blessed with the most glorious revivals of religion, and scores and hundreds, bowing sweetly to the authority of Jesus, are filled with love and joy unspeakable, they are left to slumber on in stupidity and unbelief. The anxious inquirer for the way of life and the weeping penitent are not there. The Holy Spirit, grieved by their opposition to his

truth, leaves them in deep spiritual slumber to pass on unpardoned to the overwhelming scenes of judgment and eternity. These are solemn facts; and, in view of them, never allow yourself to cherish the slightest enmity to divine truth, whether proclaimed from the pulpit, or disclosed in the Word of God. Never start back from its most powerful appeals to the understanding and the heart. It is spoken in love, with a pure regard to your eternal salvation. Receive it then in the spirit of kindness, however clearly it may point out your guilt and danger, or the duty of immediate and unconditional submission to God. Love and obey the truth with the temper of him who died to save you, and it will prove instrumental of your immortal felicity.

CHAPTER II.

THE HOLY SPIRIT RESISTED BY CAVILLING AT DIVINE TRUTH.

"And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean." — Acts 18: 6.

To cavil with the Word of God, is to raise false or frivolous objections to its important truths. This is often done from settled opposition to the distinguishing doctrines of revealed religion. Sometimes this course is taken to still the rebukes of an accusing conscience, or to shield the mind from religious impressions. At other times it is done from mere vanity to discover the acuteness of one's penetration. But all such treatment of divine truth is

exceedingly hazardous and sinful. Its effect upon the mind is decidedly pernicious. It leads to open infidelity, and directly tends to grieve the Spirit of God. The Bible is a serious book. It was written for a sublime and holy end. It is the production of the Holy Spirit, and the grand means of human salvation. It will bear the most rigid inspection, and stand the scrutiny of the most powerful intellects. Such a book is dear to the heart of God, and bears the seal of his approbation. It should be treated with high veneration, studied with the utmost candor, and with a spirit of fervent prayer. Prayer melts and subdues the soul, and prepares it to receive the truth in love. Those who cavil at the Bible trifle with the Holy Spirit, who indited it. They impeach his veracity, and pour contempt upon the work of his hands. And will he not be grieved at such conduct? Will he find a habitation in bosoms where insult, and scoffing, and vanity, and conceit, and evil speaking, meet

in communion to take counsel against the Lord of Hosts? Will he not rather flee from such scenes of confusion and wanton hostility against the sublimest displays of infinite love? If you have doubts or difficulties in relation to the Word of God, treat them like one who is accountable for all his conduct at the bar of eternal justice. If you wish to have your difficulties removed, divest your mind of prejudice, and passion, and party feeling, and self-conceit, and enter upon these sacred studies with an humble, teachable, prayerful spirit. Read the Bible through in course at least once a year. In no other way can its peculiar force, beauty, and excellence, be so impressively discovered. A minister once remarked, "I have read the Bible through in course fourteen times in fourteen years; and should I live fourteen years longer, and be blessed with health, I intend to do it again." "A good man, just ready to leave the world, expressed a desire to live a few days longer, that he might finish

reading his Bible through in course the eighteenth time upon his knees." This is the way to understand the Holy Scriptures. Be candid and patient in the investigation of divine truth, and ever remember that as yet you are but a child in knowledge. When error is discovered in your preconceived opinions, reject it. When light beams in upon your darkness, admit it with joy, thank God and take courage. If difficulties still remain, pray over them. Lie low in the dust, and, with a meek and gentle spirit, ask light from above. God will grant it; he has promised to do it. "Ask, and ye shall receive." With this temper in studying the Scriptures, seek simply to know the truth, and receive it whenever discovered, although it should sweep away the very fabric and ground of all your former belief. In this way, I have no doubt, you will soon be relieved from all your serious perplexities, and settle down upon a firm, unshaken belief in all the fundamental truths of the gospel. But on no consid-

eration cavil with the divine word; for to cavil is to trifle, and to trifle with the Spirit of God is a serious matter; such conduct, if persisted in, will ruin the soul.

Sir Francis Newport, in his youth, was the subject of religious impressions, and treated divine institutions with respect. As he advanced in life, he associated with infidels, who laughed at his serious regard for the sacred Scriptures. At first he withstood their sneers, and defended manfully the truths of revealed religion. At length, however, yielding to their persuasions, he began to cavil, and trifle with the Word of God, and finally took the ground of open infidelity. He scoffed; he sneered; the Holy Spirit was grieved, and left him, even in the present world, to feel the gnawings of the worm that never dies. His death-scene was most impressive and awful. At one time, he observed, "I have grieved his Holy Spirit so often that he has justly withdrawn his influences from me, and left me in the room thereof the spirit of impen-

itence and reprobation. O! that I had never known what religion was. Then I had never denied my Saviour, nor been so black an heir of perdition." Looking towards the fire, he said, "O, that I was to lie and broil upon that fire a thousand years to purchase the favor of God, and be reconciled to him again! But it is a fruitless wish. Millions of millions of years will bring me no nearer the end of my torments than one poor hour. O Eternity! Eternity! Who can discover the abyss of eternity? Who can paraphrase upon the words forever and ever. O ye rocks and mountains, that ye would cover me and hide me from the wrath of an incensed God! But I cannot flee from his presence; what he hath begun, he will finish; he will extend his wrath against me forever and ever!" Just before he died, he exclaimed in the agonies of despair, "O, the insufferable pangs of hell and damnation!" and expired.

In view of this awfully admonitory fact, let me entreat you never to cavil with the

Bible, nor trifle with its sacred truths, nor associate with those who are in the habit of doing it. Such conduct will grieve the Spirit; and, if he takes his final departure, you must inevitably sink down to the flames of despair, where tears, and sighs and lamentations, are unavailing. O, remember that it is a fearful thing to fall unpardoned into the hands of the living God.

CHAPTER III.

THE HOLY SPIRIT RESISTED BY ASCRIBING HIS GRACIOUS OPERATIONS TO THE INFLUENCE OF FANATICISM.

"Others, mocking, said, These men are full of new wine." — Acts 2 : 13.

Fanaticism is religious frenzy, or an excitement disproportionate to its object. It may and often does exist where no divine influence is enjoyed. It may exist also, in some degree, in conjunction with the special operations of the Holy Spirit, but is never their legitimate fruit. The Spirit of God is an infinitely wise and holy agent, and always operates upon the mind in perfect accordance with the best and noblest exercise of all its rational powers. He

illuminates the understanding, awakens the conscience, subdues the heart, and calls into action an energetic, holy, governing principle. He stops men in the career of sin, and leads them to a total abandonment of all their unrighteous pursuits. He forms a new character, leads to a new and holy life, makes men like God in their moral feelings, and excites them to works of the most pure and expansive benevolence. In a word, the Holy Spirit inclines us to abhor iniquity, to abandon sin, and to love and serve God in the most vigorous and perfect exercise of all the moral powers. And is this fanaticism? Is this an excitement disproportionate to the object? If so, heaven is full of fanaticism, and the sooner the universe is filled with it the better. Submission to the divine will, and obedience to the divine commands, are the reasonable duty of every sinner; and this is precisely what the Holy Spirit produces in regeneration. And shall such a work be called by opprobrious names? Shall insult,

and scorn, and contempt, be poured upon the sublimest product of infinite love? And yet how often is this done by impenitent sinners in revivals of religion, where changes decidedly for the better are wrought in the human character; changes, too, the most important and durable, and which no power short of infinite ever has or ever will produce! And will not such conduct grieve the Spirit? Will he see his own work despised and vilified without expressing any tokens of disapprobation? Will he pass unnoticed such flagrant insults, such wanton indignities? "Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth, but woe unto him that striveth with his Maker." All who treat the work of the Spirit in this manner resist his gracious operations, and provoke him to give them over to a reprobate mind.

"A thoughtless youth, who had grieved the Spirit by trifling away his day of grace, exclaimed on his dying bed, in the horrors of despair, 'O, I am going, I am going to

hell!' and shortly after expired without hope."

At a time of great religious interest in a pleasant town in New England, three young men, who were exceedingly depraved, made sport of the work of God. On one occasion, when the Holy Ghost seemed to fill the place where they were trifling, and numbers, burdened with sin, were anxious to know what they should do to be saved, an arrow from the Almighty, entering the heart of one of these young men, put an end to his mirth. His countenance immediately changed. A sense of his amazing guilt filled him with indescribable anguish. He broke away from his companions, and at the close of the meeting, retired to his habitation, not to trifle, but to cry for mercy. Sleep departed from him. Trembling and astonished, he sighed, and prayed, and asked in bitterness of spirit, "What shall I do to be saved?" The language of his heart was, "O my sins, my sins! What shall I do! Can one so

guilty as I am be pardoned?" Some hours after, he was enabled to cast his burdened soul upon the mercy of an infinite Saviour, and found peace in believing. The tempest was now past. He was reconciled to God. A heavenly serenity sat upon his countenance. All within was peace, and love, and joy unspeakable. His humility was deep. He became a devoted Christian, a man of prayer, and, putting on the meekness and gentleness of Christ, adorned his profession of religion by a life of piety. His two companions, amidst the most glorious displays of divine grace, continued to trifle. They opposed the work of God; they called it by opprobrious names, and reviled those who embraced the offers of mercy. The Holy Spirit, insulted and grieved by their opposition to his work, departed from them, and now, apparently given over to blindness of mind, they are travelling down, unpardoned, to a world of despair.

O, be admonished, by facts like these,

never to trifle with revivals of religion. You cannot do it with safety. The Holy Spirit, grieved by such conduct, may leave you to mourn at the last, when your flesh and your heart are consumed, and say, "How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof! I am lost, lost forever! The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and my soul is undone to all eternity!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE HOLY SPIRIT RESISTED BY EXCESSIVE WORLDLINESS.

"The care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful." —Matt. xiii. 22.

A PRESSURE of worldly business has a powerful tendency to draw the mind away from God. This every one knows, who has been at all encumbered with the affairs of the present life. "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." The design of the Holy Spirit, in convincing us of sin, is to lead us to a cheerful surrender of our hearts to Christ. This we

should ever deeply feel, when favored with his gracious operations. If a sinner, blessed with special divine influence, contrary to the dictates of his conscience, plunge too deeply into the business of the world, he will always retard this gracious work, and, it may be, constrain the Spirit to leave him forever. For, in such a case, he does violence to his own reason, and attempts to put out the light, which God is kindling up in his mind. With clearer views of sin, more affecting apprehensions of danger, more powerful impressions of duty, weightier motives pressing upon him to repent and live, the call of God waxing louder and louder, with light, and love, and goodness acting with augmented power to open his heart, and turn his affections from sin to holiness, he still pursues the perverse inclinations of a carnal mind, and envelopes his soul in the darkness of a prolonged and fearful night. Those who pursue this course resist the Spirit. They declare plainly that they prefer darkness to light,

gain to godliness, death to life, sin to holiness, earth to heaven, shadows to substance, time to eternity, a momentary possession to an imperishable treasure, the gratification of a selfish spirit to the favor of the infinite God and a portion in his everlasting kingdom. Such conduct grieves the Spirit; for no worldly business whatever is worthy for a moment to be put in competition with the salvation of the soul. The Holy Spirit knows how to estimate eternal things, and he knows how the sinner should estimate them, when favored with his enlightening and saving power. A proper attention to the affairs of this life is lawful and right; it is indeed what God requires, and will not interfere with our salvation. But an excessive attention to these things will interfere with our eternal interests, and may ruin the soul forever. Here, then, let me guard your mind. Never allow the affairs of this life to magnify themselves beyond their proper dimensions; on no con-

sideration suffer them to withdraw your attention from a preparation for the overwhelming scenes of judgment and eternity. If you feel the gentle strivings of the Spirit, or his more powerful operations, never hush them by an excessive attention to the concerns of the present life. For what will it profit you to gain the world and lose your soul? You may do an injury to yourself in a single hour which eternity cannot repair. O, let not a little glittering dust outweigh the accumulating treasure of an eternal heaven!

In a busy village in New England there once lived a man who, in early life, discovered a strong desire to amass property. He was favored with remarkable health, and pursued his occupation with uncommon diligence. Early and late he was hard at work, and laid up every dollar which he could spare, to supply, as he supposed, his future wants. His business prospered, his family increased, and, as the world was his

darling idol, he added house to house, and field to field. While he was thus engaged in his worldly concerns, God, in great mercy, poured out his Spirit in a remarkable manner upon that village, and multitudes, awakened to a sense of their condition as sinners, were pressing into his spiritual kingdom. Hundreds were seen in the inquiry meeting, and the attention of all, in a greater or less degree, was directed to the subject of religion. While the young and the old, the rich and the poor, men of business and influence, were earnestly seeking religion, the mind of this man was wrought upon by the Holy Ghost, and he also was found among the inquirers. The ministers of Christ and others conversed with him, and, as numbers all around were embracing the Saviour, it was hoped that he also would renounce the world, and make choice of Jesus as his unfailing portion. This hope was not realized. Others found their way to the cross, but he lingered. The world was in his

heart, and, although the cord which bound him to his treasures was somewhat weakened, it was not entirely cut asunder. After some months, great accessions were made to the churches, but this man was not among them. His love of gain returned; and though standing upon the threshold of the kingdom, amidst such delightful solemnities, he plunged again into the world, and quenched the kindlings of the heavenly visitor. The Holy Ghost now withdrew his influence, and left him to pursue unrestrained his chosen way. His heart was hard, and his course downward dark and dreadful. The very atmosphere around him was polluted with his shocking profanity. A sullen gloom preyed upon his spirit; the world lost its charms; gold and silver, houses and lands, could not satisfy. Tired of earth, and stung with despair, he put an end to his earthly existence, and, with the guilt of murder upon his soul, rushed into the presence of his final Judge. "The way

of the transgressor is hard." "Love not the world." "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." "Turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die?" "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

CHAPTER V.

THE HOLY SPIRIT RESISTED BY THE USE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS AS COMMON DRINKS.

"Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim." — Is. 28 : 1.

"Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." — Prov. 23 : 31, 32.

"Touch not, taste not, handle not." — Col. 2 : 21.

It has now become a well-known and a well-established truth, that the use of intoxicating liquors as common drinks is injurious both to the body and mind. They undermine the constitution, enfeeble the health, sear the conscience, derange the judgment, harden the heart, render the

mind less susceptible of religious impressions from the exhibition of divine truth, and, if not rejected, will hasten the body to a premature grave, and the deathless soul to a world of despair. And can the use of drinks, which produce such results be innocent? Impossible. It is most clearly a sin to use ardent spirit, when in health, as a common beverage, and a sin heinous in the sight of God in proportion to the clearness of the light which has been thrown upon this subject. But sin of all descriptions, while indulged and cherished, grieves the Holy Ghost, and counteracts his benevolent design. The sinner, who drinks ardent spirit daily, amidst that flood of light, which is now poured down upon him, cannot expect, and will not enjoy the convicting and converting power of the Holy Comforter; for he does, deliberately, what he knows, or may know, to be wrong and exceedingly offensive in the sight of God. The same remarks may be applied to the daily use of wine, cider, strong beer and

the like, in proportion to their alcoholic properties. They are all unnecessary; all hurtful, and the habitual use of them should be entirely and forever abandoned. An inspired writer declares that "wine is a mocker, and strong drink is raging;" and rage and mockery, the legitimate effects of intoxicating drinks, are completely at variance with that divine and heavenly influence employed in the work of the soul's conversion.

In Is. 28 : 7, we read, "But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink; they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment." In this passage, the effects of intoxicating drinks, as described by the Holy Ghost, are, wandering from the right way, error in vision, and stumbling in judgment — effects altogether diverse from those produced in regeneration by the Spirit of God.

The Holy Ghost leads back the wandering sinner to the path of holiness; he removes that false medium through which, in a state of nature, he gets erroneous views of spiritual objects, and enables him to form a correct judgment of divine and eternal things. The influence of ardent spirit is impure, sensual, debasing, dragging the soul downward to death and to hell, while the influence of the divine Comforter is holy, spiritual, ennobling, elevating, and lifting the soul upward to God and the Lamb.

My whole experience in from fifteen to twenty revivals of religion, and a good proportion of them revivals of great power, perfectly corresponds with the views I have just expressed. I cannot recollect an individual, for twenty years past, in the daily habit of drinking ardent spirit, who has become a subject of regenerating grace. Persons of this description generally feel little or no interest in regard to experimental religion, and, if awakened at all, unless they

change their habits, soon grieve the Holy Spirit, and sink down into a state of greater stupidity and hardness of heart than before. There is and can be no sympathy, no harmony at all, between the effects of intoxicating liquors, when taken into the human system, and the operations of the Spirit of God. The use of them invariably, in proportion to the quantity taken, resists and grieves the Holy Spirit. A fact or two may serve to illustrate this truth. At a time of some religious interest, a man in the habit of drinking ardent spirit was brought to think seriously upon a preparation for another world. His minister, who well knew his practice in this particular, warned him of his danger, and urged and entreated him to abandon at once and forever the use of intoxicating liquors. He replied, in effect, that he apprehended no danger from this quarter, that he did not calculate to drink much, and that a little could surely do him no harm. With these views he went on from day to day, but

made no progress in his way to the cross. At length he began to feel less interest in respect to his soul's salvation. The Holy Spirit was evidently grieved, and soon after withdrew his influence, and left him still longer to pursue his own chosen and dreadful way. Some years after, this same man was awakened again, and resolved in serious earnest to seek religion. He now gave up the use of intoxicating drinks, and attended diligently upon the means of grace. His religious impressions were deepened. The Holy Spirit broke down the opposition of his heart, and led him as a guilty suppliant to the feet of Jesus. He soon found peace in believing, came out decidedly upon the side of Christ, subscribed a temperance pledge, professed in due time his faith in Jesus, and is now hopefully travelling to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven.

In another town where God was pouring out his Spirit, a man of great influence, who was in the daily habit of using ardent

spirit, was led to think seriously upon his eternal interests, and took his place among the inquirers. Although the scene was deeply affecting, and numbers around him were submitting to Christ, he remained stationary. It was evident that some obstruction was in his way. Though not a drunkard, he would still take his regular glass; no persuasion could induce him to abstain from it. The consequence was, he lost his serious impressions. The Spirit of God, unwilling to perform a work of grace in his soul while he persisted in this guilty practice, and grieved again and again by his sensual indulgence, took, it is feared, his everlasting flight. Years have rolled away since that period, and the town has been repeatedly visited with powerful revivals, but this man has not yet been numbered among the converts to righteousness. He still slumbers on in sin, though gray hairs and the infirmities of age admonish him that death is just at the door. No arguments drawn from the dying love of Jesus, the

worth of the soul, or the momentous scenes of an approaching eternity, can effectually move his spirit, or break his repose. To all human appearance he will live and die as he is, in stupidity and unbelief, and finally experience the indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, measured out to those who do despite to the Spirit of grace.

And now, if you have not yet done it, let me advise and entreat you as a friend, in view of these and a multitude of similar facts, to abstain entirely from the use, as a beverage, of intoxicating drinks. But do you ask, "May I not take occasionally a little wine?" No, never, except in case of sickness, or for sacramental purposes. "But may I not drink fermented cider, strong beer, and the like?" No, never, not even a glass of them, in the possession of health, for the price of your soul. The use of them internally, in proportion to their alcoholic properties, stupefies the conscience, hardens the heart, and grieves the Holy Ghost, by

whose agency you must be renewed, and sanctified, and fitted for the service of a holy heaven. Will you deliberately sell your deathless soul for the momentary gratification of a sensual appetite? Will you grieve the Spirit of God by doing that which experience and facts, corresponding with divine testimony, prove to be wrong? Will you barter away a crown of life, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory at God's right hand, by the use of that the tendency of which is to destroy both soul and body in hell forever? It cannot, must not be. "Do not," saith Jehovah, "that abominable thing which I hate." If, however, advice will not answer, let me descend to entreaty, and beseech you by the worth of the soul, by the tears and agonies, the blood and death of an atoning Saviour, by all that is precious in time, and all that is joyous or painful in a vast eternity, touch not, taste not, handle not the accursed thing.

But I must not close this chapter with-

out inquiring, Do you sell intoxicating liquors to be used as a common beverage? And, if so, can this be right? Is it an honorable employment? Is it a business in the pursuit of which you can reasonably expect to enjoy the converting operations of the divine Spirit and the gracious smiles of the God of love? To ascertain this point clearly, just compare your work and its effects with the work of the Holy Spirit. Yours is to curse mankind, and his to bless them; yours to kill, and his to make alive; yours to produce anger, and wrath, and clamor, and evil-speaking, and every wicked work, and his to promote peace on earth and good will to men; yours to scatter firebrands, arrows, and death on every side, and change whole communities into a scene of frightful desolation, mourning, and woe —his to diffuse abroad peace, and love, and joy, and make this vale of tears appear like a field, which the Lord has blessed. The effect of your business is to break up the peace of families, to alienate husband and

wife, to multiply the forms of crime and wretchedness on every side, to fill our jails with prisoners, our almshouses with paupers, our country with widows, our asylums with orphans, our graveyards with premature mortality, our land with weeping, and the world of woe with the victims of despair; while the tendency of the divine Spirit's work is to perpetuate peace in families, to strengthen and render more delightful the conjugal relation, to diminish the forms of crime and misery on every side, to make the guilty holy and the wretched happy, to dry up the widow's tears, and cause the orphan's heart to sing for joy, to make the poor rich in faith, and heirs of God's everlasting kingdom, to bind up the broken heart, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; and, finally, to regenerate the world, and fill heaven with holy, glorified spirits, and endless praise.

From the contrast, you clearly perceive that your employment, and its tendency, are

altogether diverse from the work of the Holy Spirit in the human heart. And can you suppose for a moment that God will work in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure, while you deliberately pursue this guilty traffic? Such a supposition is utterly vain. God's work is holy, and yours sinful. This guilty business must be relinquished, before you will know by experience that the Lord is gracious. A single fact will illustrate this point. In a revival of great interest and power in a commercial town, a merchant, doing large business, was seen regularly in the inquiry meeting, and appeared to be deeply concerned to know what he should do to be saved. The ministers of Christ conversed with him kindly, and directed him to the Lamb of God for pardon. Week after week rolled away, but he found no peace in believing. One evening a minister from abroad, who had come in to assist in this laborious work, and had frequently con-

versed with this merchant, wishing, if possible to detect the lurking sin which prevented him from embracing the Saviour, held with him, in substance, the following conversation. "What, sir, is your employment?" "I am a merchant." "What do you sell?" "Groceries, sir." "Do you sell ardent spirit?" "I do." "What quantity have you now in your store?" "Twenty hogsheads." "And can you expect to be pardoned, while thus sinning against God?" "Do you think it sinful, sir, to sell ardent spirit?" "Indeed I do, for human consumption; it is not only sinful, but monstrous. You must relinquish this guilty business, or lie down unpardoned in endless sorrow." The merchant looked sad, and went home in distress. It was indeed a trying moment. He reflected, he prayed, and then concluded that his soul was infinitely more valuable than gold that perisheth. In view of his final account at the bar of God, he decided manfully to

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relinquish that part of his business, and deal no more in the blood of souls. He soon cleared his store of the dreadful poison, sacrificed a large sum of money, shortly after experienced a hope in Christ, came into the visible church in due time, and went on his way rejoicing. O, dear reader, be wise now for eternity! Stop while you may; turn while you can. Repent and renounce this work of death while God is upon a throne of mercy. He cannot, he will not pardon while you continue in sin. Quench not the Spirit by a moment's delay. Who can dwell with devouring fire? Who can dwell with everlasting burnings? Sell not your precious soul for worldly gain, for a mere pittance, which will prove only a curse in this life, and yield a sure harvest of anguish untold, unmitigated, and unextinguishable in the dark regions of despair. Soon you must die, and stand before God, and answer at his dreadful bar for the deeds done here in the body. How

awful the scene! Are you prepared to meet it? Bear with me while I expostulate, and ask, "Why will you die?"

"Hasten, O sinner! to be blest,
And stay not for the morrow's sun,
For fear the curse should thee arrest
Before the needful work is done."

CHAPTER VI.

THE HOLY SPIRIT RESISTED BY VAIN AMUSEMENTS AND WORLDLY PLEASURE.

"Heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. From such turn away."—2 Tim. 3:4, 5.

VAIN amusements dissipate the mind, and counteract serious impressions. The indulgence of sinful pleasure begets a distaste for the refined enjoyments of pious contemplation. The unconverted often associate with humble piety all that is forbidding, and gloomy, and morose in the human character. They appear to think that religion would dry up all their springs of earthly enjoyment. Influenced by these mistaken views, they brace themselves

against the truth, and amuse their minds with mere trifles, to ward off the convictions of the Holy Ghost. It however, sometimes occurs that such persons are awakened to reflection, and led to contemplate seriously the realities of a future life. Their sins oppress them. The gay scenes of this world die away from their vision, and eternity rolls up before them with an overwhelming grandeur. They are unhappy and disconsolate; all in time is cheerless; all beyond seems dark and dreadful. They sigh for comfort, but find it not. Restless and forlorn, they resolve to shake off these uncomfortable impressions. The process is easy — the means at hand. The stream of worldly pleasure rolls at their feet, inviting them, by a thousand charms, to embark upon its deceitful waters. Wearied with mental tossing, they launch away to seek repose upon its descending tide. Their minds are now diverted, the Spirit grieved, anxiety gone; all is gay and cheerful, until their frail bark begins to trem-

ble upon the bosom of a mightier tide. An ocean opens — its billows roll; they awake in consternation, but all is lost. Driven upon its angry waves they are dashed, and sink forever in the fathomless abyss. This is the fate of multitudes, who stifle conviction by intoxicating pleasure, and grieve the Spirit of God with vain amusements.

It is said that a young nobleman in England was once so deeply impressed with a sense of eternal things, that he knelt down to pray. Just at this moment it occurred to him, that some one might see him through the key-hole in the attitude of devotion. He rose from his knees, and, having secured this opening, it occurred to him that he would drop his window-curtains. While doing this, some charming music in the street caught his attention. He listened; his thoughts were diverted from the object of prayer. When the music ceased, his serious impressions were gone; he had no inclination to pray. The Holy Spirit, slighted and grieved, had

departed from him; and, so far from being disposed to offer supplications, he rushed from his closet into the theatre to enjoy those sinful pleasures, which plunge the soul prematurely into the fire that never shall be quenched. O, it is dangerous to trifle with the friendly visits of this divine Comforter. Should he take his final departure, the soul is destined to a world of endless mourning. Here, then, let us pause, and ponder well our course; for it is a truth, as capable of demonstration as any one in moral science, that all foolish talking and jesting, and sporting entertainments, and thoughtless merriment, and impious trifling, and the whole round of giddy pleasures inconsistent with the devout spirit of the gospel, grieve the Holy Ghost, and, if not relinquished, will seal our final doom. If, dear reader, you ever intend to enter heaven, grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you must be sealed unto the day of redemption. Engage in no conversation, mingle with no company, and pursue no

course of conduct, upon which you cannot heartily and devoutly ask the divine blessing. Shun balls and idle sports, and parties of sinful pleasure, as you would the fearful gateway to despair. Amusements of this description grieve the Spirit of God. They harden the heart, and, if not relinquished, will ruin the soul forever. "If I can persuade her to go to the ball," said a young man, "I will risk her getting religion." The lovers of pleasure know well how to grieve the Spirit of God, and drive away serious impressions, and they lay their plans accordingly. The idle sports of one short evening, yea, of a single hour, may seal your final doom, and be followed by a whole eternity of unavailing lamentation and woe. O, trifle not with infinite love! Prefer not the momentary enjoyment of sinful mirth to the endless pleasures at God's right hand. Sport not with approaching judgment, and the overwhelming scenes of immortality. Young Altamont, who was a lover of pleasure more

than a lover of God, and had grieved away the Holy Ghost, exclaimed, as he drew near eternity and the bar of his final judge, "O time, time! it is fit that thou shouldst thus strike thy murderer to the heart! How art thou fled forever! A month! O for a single week! I ask not for years, though an age were too little for the much I have to do. Remorse for the past throws my thoughts on the future; worse dread of the future strikes them back on the past. I turn, and turn, and find no ray. And is there another hell? O thou blasphemed, indulgent Lord God! Hell itself will be a refuge, if it hides me from thy frown."

"Another, who, in early life, broke away from parental restraints, and plunged into a vortex of sinful pleasure, as he felt the resistless hand of death fastened upon him became awfully alarmed. He seemed actually frantic; the very bed shook under him, as if with supernatural strength he tried to raise himself up, and shrieked out for some moments, 'O Lord Jesus, have mercy on

me! God of my father, have mercy on me! O Christ, have mercy on me! O curses, curses on those who enticed me from my father's God into their infidel ways! O mercy, mercy, Lord, on me a poor miserable outcast!' Thus he continued wailing, sometimes crying for mercy, frequently uttering imprecations, until his strength was utterly exhausted, and his spirit, with an agonizing struggle, took its everlasting flight.

'A death-bed 's a detecter of the heart;
Men may live fools, but fools they cannot die.'"

And now, reader, in view of such examples, speaking with fearful solemnity from the threshold of the coming world, will you pursue the giddy paths of sinful pleasure, and enter the valley of the shadow of death, without one glimmering star of hope to cheer you amidst the gathering darkness of the tomb? Will you drink the full cup of sensual delight in this moment of probation, and be compelled in exchange for it to drink, to all eternity, the wine of the

wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation?

"Stop, poor sinner, stop and think,
Before you farther go;
Will you sport upon the brink
Of everlasting woe?"

Before you resolve upon such a course, listen attentively to the declaration of Jehovah. "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth; and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment." O yes! he will assuredly bring you into judgment; and that you may now realize the solemnity of this event, and prepare for it, just follow the impenitent sinner to the bar of God, into the presence of him before whom the heavens and the earth flee away, whose eyes like a flame of fire, with the concentrated power of a thousand sunbeams, will pierce him through and through, and by whose lips will be pronounced, like the

noise of many waters, and the voice of mighty thunderings, that awful sentence, "Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." O, remember that this fearful sentence, once pronounced by Jehovah, is pronounced forever! The principalities of heaven, earth, and hell, cannot revoke it. "For he is of one mind, and who can turn him?" Heaven and earth shall pass away, but his word shall not pass away. O that final, fearful sentence, "Depart from me," when pronounced by the great Judge of quick and dead, will fill the guilty, condemned sinner with unutterable consternation! His day of grace is passed. His sun has set in everlasting night. His doom is sealed, irrevocably, eternally sealed. The light of hope is extinguished forever. The waves of divine indignation have commenced their ceaseless rolling. His home is eternal, his companions eternal, his pains eternal. Final despair, with all its unmitigated, unextinguishable aggravations, will

brood over his spirit, and cover futurity with impervious gloom. Through eternity, ever wasting, never ending, he must live to acknowledge how fearful it is to grieve the Holy Ghost, and fall unpardoned into the hands of the living God, who will render to every man according to his works, and will by no means clear the guilty.

Turn now from the death scene of those who have grieved the Spirit of God, by indulging in sinful pleasure, to that of Dr. Payson, who received the Holy Ghost, and in his dying hours appeared to be filled with his heavenly influence. "I am going to Mount Zion," said that great and good man, in an ecstasy of joy, "I am going to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, and to God, the judge of all. The celestial city is full in my view. Its glories beam upon me, its breezes fan me, its odors are wafted to me, its sounds strike upon my ear, and

its spirit is breathed into my heart. Nothing separates me from it, but the river of death, which now appears as an insignificant rill, that may be crossed at a single step, whenever God shall give permission. The Sun of righteousness has been gradually drawing nearer and nearer, appearing larger and brighter as he approached, and now he fills the whole hemisphere, pouring forth a flood of glory in which I seem to float like an insect in the beams of the sun, exulting, yet almost trembling, while I gaze on this excessive brightness, and wondering with unutterable wonder, why God should deign thus to shine upon a sinful worm. A single heart and a single tongue seem altogether inadequate to my wants. I want a whole heart for every separate emotion, and a whole tongue to express that emotion." Again, "I can find no words to express my happiness. I seem to be swimming in a river of pleasure, which is carrying me on to the great fountain. Last night I had a full, clear view of death, as

the king of terrors; how he comes and crowds the poor sinner to the very verge of the precipice of destruction, and then pushes him down headlong. But I felt that I had nothing to do with this; and I love to sit like an infant at the feet of Christ, who saved me from this fate. I felt that Death was disarmed of all his terrors; all that he could do was to touch me, and let my soul loose to go to my Saviour. My soul, instead of growing weaker and more languishing as my body does, seems to be endued with an angel's energies, and to be ready to break from the body, and to join with those around the throne."

Such triumphs and joys, such delightful anticipations of future blessedness, are the fruits of the Spirit, and they are never enjoyed by those who resist his influence. As you clearly perceive a striking contrast between these two characters, your sober judgment will not leave you in doubt for a moment which to prefer. O, be wise to refuse the evil, and to choose the good.

Receive and cherish the Spirit's influence, and through his abounding grace you will be able to triumph amidst the conflicts of dissolving nature, and shine at last as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars forever and ever.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HOLY SPIRIT RESISTED BY LIGHT READING.

"Many, also, of them which used curious arts, brought their books together and burned them before all men." — Acts 19 : 19.

By light reading I mean novels, romances, and plays, and much of a similar description, found in many of the penny pamphlets and some of the secular newspapers of the present day. The plots and characters, the exciting scenes, the novel tales and visionary descriptions, to say nothing of the profane and licentious thoughts often found in such productions, show clearly that the reading of them would be disastrous to a mind favored with the operations of the

Holy Spirit. That divine agent has no sympathy with, nor delight in such productions. They counteract his gracious design in the work of redemption; and the sinner, who persists in reading them, when favored with his awakening influence, will do it at the peril of his soul. You might almost as soon expect to find salvation in a ball-room or theatre, as while reading such books. Their effect upon the heart is altogether diverse from the effect produced by the Holy Spirit in the work of conversion. Their tendency is to amuse the mind, to excite the passions, to destroy serious reflection, to kill devotion, to withdraw the affections from the Bible, the heart from the closet and sanctuary, and the thoughts from a serious contemplation of God and the realities of a coming world.

Allow me here to state a fact, illustrating the influence of such reading upon the mind and heart of an experimental Christian. Some years ago, a distinguished clergyman in New England had an impression, that

to appear in society as a man of intelligence, he must read Scott's novels. To accomplish this object, he exchanged three Sabbaths in succession with his brethren in the ministry, and devoted the time thus gained to novel reading. He accomplished his purpose, but the experiment proved disastrous to his religious interests. His prayers became heartless and formal. The peculiar delight, which he had previously found in the study of the Scriptures, and in communion with God, was gone. The Holy Spirit, grieved at this sinful misapplication of his time and talents, withdrew his presence, and left him desolate. He could not study or preach with a heavenly unction, nor were his feelings in a proper state to pray with, and direct an inquiring sinner to the Lamb of God. His eyes were now open upon the folly and guilt of the course he had pursued. He saw and felt that he had done wrong, that he had resisted and grieved the Spirit of God. He confessed his sin; he sighed and mourned,

and with deep contrition besought the Lord once more to afford him his gracious presence. At length the cloud was withdrawn, but not until he had been taught, by mournful experience, never again in this way to grieve the Spirit of God. It is to be hoped that no minister of Christ will ever try a similar experiment.

Now, if such reading would constrain the Holy Spirit to withdraw his sanctifying influence from one whom he loved, we might surely expect that he would withhold his renewing operations from an impenitent sinner, pursuing a similar course, while his thoughts and feelings are only evil continually. And such we find to be the fact. Sinners who, in revivals of religion, devote themselves to light reading, are not among the converts to righteousness. They are generally averse to severe thought and solemn reflection. They are too much occupied with the exciting scenes portrayed in fiction to bestow a serious thought upon a preparation for another

world. The Holy Spirit, grieved by this sinful abuse of their time and powers, leaves them to pursue their chosen way.

A youth in college, who devoted his time almost entirely to this kind of reading, passed through a revival of religion of such power that it seemed as if heaven and earth had met in solemn conference. The presence of God in a peculiar sense filled the place. Sports were relinquished, and profanity and trifling hushed. Young men of taste and refinement, and even the profane and dissolute, were subdued and humbled, and enabled to sit together in joyful penitence at the feet of Jesus. He beheld his companions in study, and those who sat by his side at the same table, bowed down under a sense of sin, and become new creatures in Christ Jesus. He saw them entirely changed; he heard them converse and pray; but his own heart was unaffected. Warnings were unheeded, and the entreaties of the pious heard without effect. As the revival progressed, God's

chosen vessels were gathered into his spiritual kingdom; but this youth was not among them. Read novels and plays he would and did, even amidst these remarkable scenes of gracious visitation. He disregarded the work of the Lord, and the Spirit left him among those who despise, and wonder, and finally perish. He left college an impenitent sinner. Some time after, disease seized upon him, and he died, and was called, it is feared, unexpectedly to himself, to give up his account to that God who has said, "Those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." Luke 19: 27. "He that, being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." Prov. 29: 1.

Let those who read these pages be advised upon a subject so intimately connected with their eternal welfare. It is a serious matter to live in a revival of religion, and to be called in a special manner

by the Holy Spirit to make one's peace with God. The scene is serious. The work to be done and its results are serious. The Spirit of God, reader, who comes to work in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure, is serious. You too should be serious; you must be serious, or experience the woes of the second death. To amuse yourself with light reading, under such circumstances, would not only be out of place but highly criminal. It would be trifling with heaven and hell, with God and salvation. It would show, conclusively, that you prefer an hour's entertainment to the everlasting favor of God. It would be an insult offered to the Holy Spirit, who knows well what estimate you ought to set upon his convicting and converting influence. He comes to save; and will you trifle? He comes to pluck you as a brand from the eternal burnings; and will you be heedless? He comes to convince you of sin, to lead you to Christ for pardon; and will you constrain him to leave you by a

wanton misapplication of your time and powers? O, trifle not, when God comes so near! You cannot do it with safety. A single half hour at such a time, devoted to a novel or romance, or any reading of this description, may constrain the Spirit to leave you forever, and seal your final doom.

But do you ask, "What may I read with safety?" *The Bible*, first and most of all, and especially the New Testament, with the Psalms and Prophets. "Baxter's Call to the Unconverted," "Alleine's Alarm," "Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul," and books of a kindred spirit, may be read by an inquiring sinner with profit and safety. When the way of life is discovered from these books, you must by repentance and faith enter upon it immediately. Hesitation or delay under such circumstances is sinful, and will grieve the Spirit.

There is a state of feeling under the operations of the Spirit, in which the taste for light reading is, for the time at least,

entirely destroyed. At a season of special religious interest in my congregation, a young lady, much inclined to novel reading suspended the perusal of one, which she thought peculiarly interesting, to attend religious meetings. Her attention was arrested; she was convicted of sin; and at a certain stage of her conviction, to her great surprise, she entirely lost her taste for novels, and laid the book aside as a worthless thing. Up to this point in conviction there is peculiar danger; beyond it the sinner will not trifle.

One fact more. In that powerful revival of religion in D —— College, in 1826, the novel departments in the circulating libraries were scarcely touched, while at other times they were generally empty. The operations of the Spirit were so deep and powerful, that convicted sinners lost their taste for reading of this description, and those who were slightly awakened, or not awakened at all, were so overawed with the divine presence, that their attention was

directed another way. At the same time these libraries were entirely emptied of such works as those of Baxter and Doddridge, which for years preceding had rested on their shelves in undisturbed repose.

I appeal to facts for the purpose of illustration; and facts are arguments which, like figures, will not deceive. I have felt constrained to speak freely on this subject, and to speak with solemnity and emphasis, since our country at the present day is flooded with productions, which pollute the mind, and are strikingly fitted to destroy both soul and body in hell forever. Reader, beware! You are acting for eternity. Dangers stand thick around you, and they are more to be dreaded, since they appear in disguise, and like the serpent charm only to destroy. Quench not the Spirit. Hasten to Christ. Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace, whereby good shall come unto thee.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HOLY SPIRIT RESISTED BY CONCEALING CONVICTION.

"My Spirit shall not always strive with man." — Gen. 6:3.

Conviction of sin is the work of the Spirit, and a disposition to conceal it is opposed to the very genius of the gospel. Pride is at the bottom of all such feelings, and pride is detestable in the sight of God. "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words," says our Saviour, "of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels." Many have checked the operations of the Spirit, and lost them entirely, by concealing their

convictions. Sinners will sometimes hide the conflict in their own bosoms, until Nature herself, sighing beneath the load, tells to demonstration that trouble is there.

A young man, awakened by the Spirit in a revival of religion, after a night of anxiety and weeping in view of his perishing condition, in the morning carefully wiped from his face all traces of his tears, and assumed an air of lightness, lest the family should suspect that he was about to forsake the world, and choose the Saviour as his everlasting portion. Such conduct is a stern resistance of the divine Spirit, and exceedingly offensive to the eyes of infinite purity. It is a tacit acknowledgment, on the part of awakened sinners, that they esteem the world above Christ, that they fear man more than God. Religion can never be enjoyed in this way; it seeks no concealment — it fears no inspection. If, then, you intend to secure the favor of God, be open, and bold, and decided upon this subject. Tell the world modestly, but

with decision and firmness, that you are determined to become a follower of Jesus. The more decided you are, the sooner your convictions will be brought to a happy crisis. Disclose your feelings freely to your pastor, and ask his prayers, and the prayers of such Christians as can wrestle at the throne of mercy. There is in such a course a magnanimity becoming an immortal being. It will deepen your convictions. It will be like signing an obligation in the face of many witnesses, that religion is to be your first, your great concern. Going back will be out of the question. A host of powerful motives will be urging you forward to an unconditional surrender to the Saviour. The prayers of the people of God will be awakened in your behalf; and your case will be carried to the throne of grace with much greater fervor and importunity. In every possible way, then, invite the influences of the divine Spirit, cherish his gracious operations, yield yourself to his holy guidance, and he will lead you to the

Lamb of God, to the blood of sprinkling, which taketh away the sin of the world.

An amiable youth was once awakened to the subject of religion. He wanted instruction, but the pride of his heart prevented him from disclosing his feelings, and the Spirit left him. Again and again did the Holy Ghost set before him his duty and destiny. He sighed, he prayed; but, keeping the conflict in his own bosom, he quenched the heavenly influence. In this way, for six long years, he resisted the Spirit of God. At length this divine agent, so often slighted and abused, returned again, and, as the young man verily believed, for the last time. His sins were set in order before him. He felt justly condemned. He knew that he had done wrong by resisting the Spirit. The conflict was long and severe. Submission or eternal death appeared to be the only alternative. Borne down with a sense of sin almost to despair, he resolved to disclose his feelings. He did so; he went to his minister, and made

known to him his troubles. At once the mountains vanished; the fear of man disappeared. He soon bowed sweetly at the feet of Jesus, and received him joyfully as his Lord and his God. Urged forward by his love for souls, he finally entered the ministry, and has preached for years the unsearchable riches of Christ.

"Stay, thou insulted Spirit, stay!
Though I have done thee such despite;
Cast not the sinner quite away,
Nor take thine everlasting flight."

CHAPTER IX.

THE HOLY SPIRIT RESISTED BY DEFERRING REPENTANCE.

"And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." — Acts 24 : 25.

The worth of the soul far exceeds all human computation. Its endless being, its capacious and noble powers, capable of such immense enjoyment or suffering, give it a value which none but the infinite God can fully estimate. The salvation of this undying soul has engaged the mighty energies of the Holy Spirit. For this benevolent purpose he breaks in upon the slumbers of men, and wakes them up to feeling and to

effort. Excited by his divine impulse, they begin to read, and meditate, and pray, and ask the way to Zion, and seem resolved to enter upon the right way. Many of this description, however, endure only for a time; for when the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things crowd in upon the mind, their attention is diverted from the amazing interests of the soul. Difficulties arise, the way looks dark, their resolution fails; and, like the man who set out to build a tower without counting the cost, they become discouraged before the foundation is fairly laid. They appear to think that they have done all in their power for salvation, before, in fact, they have done any thing at all. A few prayers, and tears, and heartless efforts, are the consummation of their struggle for the kingdom of God. They hastily conclude that at some other time the work can be performed with greater ease. With these impressions they relax their efforts, and return back again to a state of stupidity.

This course is pursued by thousands, to their everlasting sorrow. God calls, but they refuse; he entreats, but they heed it not. They deliberately close their ears to all the warnings and invitations of the gospel. Its language is, "Repent and be converted" — "Awake to righteousness and sin not" — "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" — "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure;" but such directions are not congenial with a proud and worldly spirit. They refuse to labor, and pray, and strive for salvation in obedience to the commands of God. They break away from the very grasp of the Spirit, and assume an attitude of resistance more repulsive and determined than before. And will not such conduct grieve the Holy Comforter? Will his patience endure forever, his long-suffering never fail? Will he come again and again to the barren fig-tree, and, finding no fruit on it, will he never cut it down? He works by means; he draws by motives; he operates upon

the sinner's heart to make it fruitful in deeds of righteousness. If these kind monitions are disregarded, and the trifles of an hour allowed to outweigh the undying pleasures of a peaceful immortality, the Holy Spirit is grieved, and may take his final departure from those who thus slight and abuse his benevolent work. Felix grieved the Spirit by deferring repentance to a more convenient season, and in all probability lost his soul.

> "Procrastination is the thief of time;
> Year after year it steals, till all are fled,
> And to the mercies of a moment leaves
> The vast concerns of an eternal scene."

"A man nearly eighty years old, on his dying bed, made to his children the following disclosure: 'When just entering my sixteenth year, religious impressions were made on my mind with unusual force. I seemed to hear a voice continually saying to me, "Seek religion now." My former amusements lost their relish; still I was not willing to renounce them wholly, and obey

the voice which urged me to seek religion immediately. One day, after much reflection, I deliberately promised to God that, as soon as the season of youthful amusements was past, I would devote myself to religious pursuits. My anxieties immediately left me ; I returned to my amusements, and the whole subject was soon forgotten. When at twenty-five, the monitory voice returned, reminded me of my promise, and again pressed upon me the importance of eternal things. Though I had not thought of my promise for years, I acknowledged its obligation ; but an immediate fulfillment seemed more impracticable than it did nine years before. I vowed, with increasing solemnity, that, when the cares of a rising family should subside, I would certainly attend to the concerns of religion. Again I applied myself to worldly avocations, and soon buried all thoughts of the admonition I had received. At fifty, when the cares of my family were diminished, the heavenly monitor returned. " Fulfil your promise —

seek religion now" — was continually pressing my mind. The subject made me unhappy; but, after much deliberation, I sought relief to my troubled feelings by solemnly renewing my promise to God. I said, when the pressure of my business is past, I will devote my whole attention to a preparation for eternity. No sooner had I fixed my mind on this course than my anxieties left me; the strivings of the Spirit ceased in my bosom, and ceased forever. When sickness warned me of approaching death, I sought to fix my feelings on this subject; but it was in vain. I felt that I was forsaken of God; but it did not move me. I had no love to God — no repentance for sin, nor wish to forsake it. I felt nothing but the solemn gloom of despair. I knew I was in the hands of a justly-offended God, from whom I expected no mercy, and could ask none. With these feelings I am now about to enter the eternal world. To you, my children, I can only say, profit by my example; quench not the Spirit; seek reli-

gion now; if you would avoid a miserable eternity, put not off the concerns of your soul.' The sentence died upon his lips; he fell back upon his bed, and, with a groan that seemed to speak the pains of another world, his immortal spirit took its flight to the presence of his final Judge, to receive at his hand according to the deeds done in the body."

O, reader, be wise! "Be wise to-day; 'tis madness to defer." Remember, that to prefer deliberately a future time to the present, for the great business of life, is an insult offered to the Spirit, attended with unspeakable hazard to the soul. It is to prefer your wisdom to his, and your own supposed convenience to the glory of his infinite grace in making you a monument of God's everlasting favor.

CHAPTER X.

THE HOLY SPIRIT RESISTED BY YIELDING TO THE ENTICEMENTS OF UNGODLY ASSOCIATES.

"My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not." —Prov. 1 : 10.
"Quench not the Spirit." —1 Thess. 5 : 19.

It is a melancholy fact, that multitudes are alive to do evil, while to do good they have no heart. A youth is awakened to the subject of religion. He attends diligently upon the means of grace, and seems resolved to secure salvation. The more he reads, and meditates, and prays, and seeks to know the truth, the more deeply his mind is impressed with the momentous realities of another world. He is brought

to stand upon the very threshold of the kingdom, and seems just ready to enter it; but, alas! he is not yet out of danger. His former companions watch him with a wakeful solicitude, and spare no efforts to bring him back again to their deserted circle. They attempt to soothe his fears, and swell his pride, and puff his vanity, and persuade him away from the faithful exhibitions of the gospel and the pious influence of praying friends. At first he hesitates, yields but little, and trembles for the result. The temptation is repeated. Again he yields with still less reluctance, and is gradually borne away amidst the scenes of thoughtless festivity. His attention is now diverted from personal religion. The Holy Spirit is grieved, his anxieties vanish, the world becomes his idol; he lives in stupidity, and dies without hope, as the bitter fruits of having grieved the Spirit of God by yielding to the enticements of wicked associates. This is but an illustration of facts, which crowd upon the mind of almost

every observing Christian. Elymas, the sorcerer, "full of all subtlety and mischief, a child of the devil and an enemy of all righteousness," endeavored to turn away the deputy from the faith; and multitudes from that day to the present have followed his example. Here, then, set up your Ebenezer, and inscribe upon it, "My purpose is fixed, I am resolved to become a child of God." To all who would dissuade you from seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, reply firmly, "Your counsel is not good; for how can I do this great evil and sin against God? As for me, I will serve the Lord." "If sinners entice thee, consent thou not." Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God by yielding to the persuasions of impenitent companions. Hearken to no proposals, yield to no entreaties, submit to no persuasions, to draw you away from the faithful exhibitions of the gospel. Dread the loss of divine influence, more than you would the loss of property, influence, health, endeared asso-

ciates, or even life itself. The Holy Ghost calls, entreats, persuades you to repent, by motives the most weighty, the most powerful ever brought to act upon the human mind. If you turn away from these weighty motives by yielding to the enticements of dying men, you slight the offers of infinite grace, and treat the blessed Spirit with high disrespect. Such a course is extremely dangerous; it has proved fatal to multitudes.

"A young man in the academy at A., a few years ago, in a season of revival, was visited by the Holy Spirit, and indulged a hope of pardon. He was a youth of fine talents and of wealth, the joy of his parents, who were opposers to religion. When he visited them, they ridiculed his seriousness; and he came back opposed to religious meetings and to all serious things. He was conversed with, and exhorted not to resist the Holy Ghost, and harden his heart, lest he should lose his soul. All religious duties soon became irksome to him, and he left for another school, where such restraints

were not imposed. It was not long before he and one of his gay companions hired a carriage with two horses and a driver, and set out to attend a ball in a neighboring town. Having proceeded a short distance, his head was seen by his companion to drop. The latter called to the driver to stop. The unhappy youth in an imperious tone said to the driver, '*Drive the horses to hell, as quick as possible.*' He never spoke again, and, in a few moments, was in the presence of his final Judge!"

"Delay not, delay not; the Spirit of grace,
Long grieved and resisted, may take its sad flight,
And leave thee in darkness to finish thy race,
To sink in the vale of eternity's night."

CHAPTER XI.

THE HOLY SPIRIT RESISTED BY A REFUSAL ON THE PART OF AWAKENED SINNERS TO ATTEND MEETINGS OF RELIGIOUS INQUIRY.

"Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh." — Prov. 1: 24—26.

Among the most important means of grace at the present day, are seasons for personal conversation upon the subject of religion. God has put upon them, in a peculiar manner, the seal of his approbation. They have often been the favored moments when the soul has decided for a glorious immortality.

"Silence was there, and with itself each soul
Solemn communion held; the Holy Ghost
Was there, and whispered to each sin-sick soul,
'This is the way; why wilt thou strive with God?
Repent, repent! now is the accepted time,—
The day in which salvation may be thine.'"

In such a place, and at such a time, all is still, solemn, impressive. The world recedes, eternity opens, and every soul may commune with God, may bow to Christ. The Holy Ghost hovers around the scene, and makes it sacred with the manifestations of his grace and glory. The prayers, the addresses, the conversation, the stillness, the solemnity, all tend to point the sinner to the Lamb of God. There is perhaps no place on earth more completely adapted to bring a convicted mind to an unconditional surrender to the Saviour. Peter, and the rest of the apostles, on the day of Pentecost, held an inquiry meeting of great interest, which three thousand attended, and all of them submitted to Christ on the spot, and became the hopeful subjects of regenerating grace. Paul and Silas held an inquiry

meeting in the house of their prison, which the jailer, and perhaps some of his family, attended; and he at least believed in Christ to the saving of his soul. Philip the evangelist held an inquiry meeting in the eunuch's chariot, at which time the sable Ethiopian, by an act of faith, received Jesus as his atoning Saviour, and went on his way rejoicing. At a crowded meeting for inquiry, in a pastor's house, the Holy Ghost filled the place, and while the impressions of all were deepened, one man arose, and exclaimed with emotion, "O! I have found, I have found my Saviour." He has held on his way, and now, venerable for age and for piety, is just ready to enter his everlasting home in the skies. At the examination of sixty individuals, who were admitted to the church at the same time, after a revival of great purity and power, it was found that, in nearly every case, attending the inquiry meeting gave a turn to their feelings, which, under God, resulted in those religious hopes upon which they ventured to make

a public profession of their faith in Jesus? And shall pride, or the fear of man, keep you away from such scenes of heavenly visitation? Will you refuse to go where God unveils his glory, where Christ displays his love, where the Spirit breathes upon the soul a vitality which can never be extinguished? This would stifle conviction, would grieve the Spirit, and might ruin the soul forever. A lady under conviction, in a revival of religion, was invited to take her place among the inquirers. She refused to do it, though her conscience at the time told her it was her duty. I saw her afterward, and she assured me, with sadness of heart, that at that time, and by that act, she grieved the Spirit, and feared that he had taken of her his final leave.

During a powerful work of grace in A., many awakened sinners were seen in the inquiry room, asking the way to Zion. Two men, it is said, walking slowly up to the door, stopped, and, with an evident conflict within, seemed to deliberate. A

ength, one of them, crushing his pride, and ising above the fear of man, entered the oom, and soon hopefully embraced the Sa-iour. The other lingered awhile, turned bout, and walked slowly away. The Holy Spirit, grieved by his resistance, with-drew his influence, and he returned back gain to a state of stupidity.

If at any time you have the least inclina-ion to ask the way to Zion, gratify it, cher-sh it. Go to the Bible, to the mercy-seat, nd to the place where others meet to ask he way, and disclose your feelings freely o those who are set to watch for souls, and re able to guide them in the way of life. f pride and the fear of man would keep ou back, go the more on this account, and rush them both with a single blow. They nust die, or you are ruined. Bid the world tay behind, while you make a covenant vith the King of kings. Go with a broken eart, repenting of the past, seeking guid-nce for the future, and with a fixed deter-ination to yield yourself a willing sacrifice

to God. When at the meeting, if not engaged in conversation, lift up your soul to God in silent, fervent prayer for the subduing influence of his grace. Penetrated with a sense of sin, look up to Christ as your only refuge, and rest on him as the chief corner-stone of your salvation. Pursuing this course, you may expect to find a pardoning God, a smiling Saviour, a quickening Spirit, a peaceful conscience, a hope full of immortality, and at last a crown of life which fadeth not away. Quench not the Spirit, then, by refusing to do what conscience bids you, what the Bible approves, and what the providence of God clearly points out to be your duty. If you are ashamed of Christ, he will be ashamed of you; if you reject his offered grace here, he will cast you off in that final day, when he shall number up his jewels.

"Hasten, O sinner! to be wise,
And stay not for the morrow's sun;
The longer Wisdom you despise,
The harder is she to be won."

CHAPTER XII.

THE HOLY SPIRIT RESISTED BY AWAKENED SINNERS, WHEN THEY ARE CONVINCED THAT IMMEDIATE SUBMISSION TO GOD IS THEIR INDISPENSABLE DUTY, BUT STILL NEGLECT TO DO IT.

"Yield yourselves unto God."—Rom. 6: 13.

IMMEDIATE submission to God is the indispensable duty of every sinner, and no one can offer any satisfactory reason why he does not do it. It often occurs that awakened sinners manifest no intention to defer submission; they seem to be aware that delay is attended with infinite hazard, and sometimes express a willingness, and even a strong desire, to submit to Christ; but still the work is not done. Whether,

in such cases, the particular obstruction can be discovered or not, sin is always the guilty cause, — it is their own, — and, while they refuse to relinquish it, they grieve the Spirit of God. The Holy Ghost points out to them the way of life, but they refuse to walk in it ; — this is resistance. He makes their duty clear as daylight, simple as the very elements of language, but they refuse to do it ; — this is resistance. He presents to their minds the most powerful motives as inducements to an immediate surrender of their hearts to God, but they refuse to yield to these motives ; — this is resistance. Sinners often suppose that they are entirely willing to submit to Christ, while at the same time they are withstanding the offers of his grace with a giant's energies. Conscience and the Spirit of God urge them mightily to give up the contest, and bow to Jesus, but their stubborn wills rebel. This is the grand cause of all that distress, and anguish, and depression of spirit, which sometimes weigh down the soul to the very

borders of despair. Let them cease from resisting, and all will be peace; yield to Christ, and all will be quiet. Those who are convinced that this is their immediate duty, and still neglect to do it, grieve the Spirit of grace, and hazard their everlasting all. There should be no hesitating, no lingering in this grand concern. The mighty work should be done now, can be done now with divine assistance, and, if neglected now, may not be done at all. To-morrow with you may be eternity; before to-morrow, divine forbearance may be exhausted, and the measure of iniquity full.

A young lady was once awakened by the Holy Spirit, and brought to contemplate seriously her interests for eternity. She saw herself justly condemned as a transgressor of the divine law, and knew that she ought to flee to Christ as her only refuge. Conscience, together with the Word and Spirit of God, urged her to repent immediately, and submit cheerfully to the authority of Jesus. She was brought, ap-

parently, to stand upon the very threshold of God's spiritual kingdom, and seemed just ready to enter. The Spirit called, and urged, and pressed upon her his claims; but still the work was not done. At length the blessed Comforter was grieved, and withdrew his influence; she went back to the world, became a thoughtless, trifling sinner, and could sport upon the very brink of eternal burnings.

One day, while conversing with a family in the discharge of my parochial duties, a messenger entered the room in haste, and requested me to go to a neighboring house, to pray with a young woman who was apparently dying. I did so, and, on entering the room, witnessed a scene which, while reason remains, I can never forget, and which I have no power adequately to describe. The young lady just mentioned was there, prostrated upon a bed of languishment, and, to all human appearance, was soon to enter upon the retributions of another world. Her affrighted looks, her

agitated frame, and piteous cries, "O, I cannot die! I cannot die!" were enough to make us all feel how fearful it is for a sinner to fall unpardoned into the hands of the living God. I approached the bed, and attemped to point her to Jesus, the sinner's friend; but to no purpose. A cloud covered her mind, and an agony of distress filled her agitated bosom. The Spirit had departed; an insulted Saviour kept at a distance. She wanted to flee from death and an avenging Judge, but could do neither. O, to drink the wrath of God, to feel the gnawings of the worm that never dies, and to enter the fire that never shall go out, were overwhelming to her despairing soul! I prayed with her, but she found no peace; and I was obliged to leave her, without having been able to dart one ray of light through that oppressive gloom which then hung so heavily upon her sinking spirit.

O, reader, if you are yet impenitent, let me entreat you, by all that is precious in the love of Christ, by all that is cheering

in the hopes of the gospel, by all that is comforting in the presence of Jesus at a dying hour, by all that is glorious in heaven and fearful in hell, not to grieve the Holy Spirit, whereby you are sealed to the day of redemption! But do you ask, "What shall I do?" Do? Submit to Christ. "But how shall I do it?" Feel as Christ requires, and do as he says. Repent, believe, love and obey God with all your heart. This is religion — practical religion.

CHAPTER XIII.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

1. Those who resist the Holy Ghost incur great guilt. Guilt is increased in proportion to light and privileges slighted and abused. A sinner awakened by the Holy Spirit has clearer views of himself, of sin, of God, of Christ, of duty, of revelation, and of all the fundamental truths of the gospel. He sees, he hears, he reads and reflects, with feelings and impressions altogether new. He is urged to immediate repentance by weighty and imperative considerations, which he never felt before. The admonitions of conscience, the calls of the Spirit, the warnings of Providence, the threatenings of revelation, the invitations of the gospel, the instructions of ministers, the entreaties of friends, the solemnities of

death, the disclosures of judgment, the retributions of eternity, — all, like a cloud of living witnesses, call upon him to repent and live, with a voice loud and impressive enough almost to awake the dead, and to put speaking tongues and praying hearts into the very ashes of the tomb. And can this amount of evidence, this array of motives, this combined testimony of witnesses from heaven, earth, and hell, be rejected without enhancing our guilt? But what saith the Scriptures? "He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy, under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" Guilt, amazing guilt, is incurred by resisting the Holy Ghost; and yet, how often is it looked upon as a mere trifle? how many have done it, and are still doing it, without any adequate con-

ception of the wrong done to their own souls, or the dishonor reflected upon the God of truth! And why, impenitent reader, will you pursue a course so completely at variance with reason and revelation, so utterly hostile to your present and future peace? Why resist the Spirit of God, till divine forbearance is exhausted, and the measure of iniquity full?

2. Those who resist the Holy Spirit are in imminent peril. As in human affairs, so in religion,

> "There is a tide,
> Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
> Omitted, all the voyage of life
> Is bound with shallows and with miseries."

A man upon a wreck, driven by the angry waves, is in imminent peril; but his case becomes hopeless, indeed, when in this condition he rejects the kind hand which comes to his rescue. It is dangerous beyond expression for sinners to resist the Holy Ghost; that benevolent agent who comes in mercy to save them, condemned

as they are by the divine law, and liable every moment to be dashed upon the billows of eternal death. No one knows but the present is his last call, and, if this be misimproved, his sun of mercy may set, to rise no more forever. There is a time when God will hear, when the sinner may be reconciled to his Heavenly King. "Come, now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." "Behold, now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation."

There is a time when God will not hear. "Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone." "Though ye make many prayers, I will not hear." "Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer." O, it is a fearful thing for poor, dependent, helpless sinners, to reject the offers of unmerited grace, and grieve the Spirit of God. By one fatal act, you may blot out the last star of hope which now glimmers in your spir-

itual horizon, and be left to grope your dreary way downward, unpardoned, to the regions of everlasting despair. "Be wise, now, and remember this, O ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver."

"Return, O wanderer, return!
Thy Saviour bids thy spirit live;
Go to his bleeding feet, and learn
How freely Jesus can forgive."

And now, beloved reader, this solemn and momentous subject I must leave with you. To your care is committed a priceless soul. Its salvation is placed within your reach. The Holy Ghost is given, to subdue and control its capacious and growing powers, and fit them for the joys and glories of an eternal heaven. These joys, these endless glories, will be yours or not, as you receive or reject the blessed Spirit. May the considerations presented in this book be so impressed upon your mind by a God of love, that, when your earthly

house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved, you may have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, and go to dwell forever with the Lord.

THE END.

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